



**Workforce Alliance (WA) Board of Directors**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
January 28, 2026

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Workforce Alliance Board met in person at the Wichita Workforce Center and virtually via Zoom. Vice Chair Scott Stiles called the meeting to order and asked for self-introductions.

**2. Public Comment**

No requests for public comment were received.

**3. 2026-2028 WA Board of Directors Strategic Planning**

The WA has been engaging in strategic planning process since August with five sessions being held with subject matter experts and community partners discussing many aspects of the workforce development ecosystem.

A resulting strategic framework was presented that organizes the WA's focus into four key strategic pillars and recognizes some of the current challenges of the workforce system: performance and service excellence, youth and career pathways, system alignment with community impact, and revenue generation and innovation. There was discussion about whether the plan takes on too much given potential funding constraints, but staff and board members agreed that setting an ambitious vision is necessary and motivational. The framework focuses on leveraging existing systems to pursue diverse funding sources for more targeted priority populations, including foster care and disconnected youth, veterans, military spouses, and justice-involved individuals.

The framework has been reviewed by the Executive Committee, local policymakers, community leaders and partners to refine the framework, including updates to the mission statement and content adjustments to various sections of it. A revised framework from what was included in the meeting materials was presented. Key changes were explained and included consolidating work-based learning with career awareness, removing redundant language, and revising the mission statement that emphasizes building a skilled workforce and economic growth.

There are concerns about recent and potential workforce board mergers in Kansas. Staff emphasize the importance of regional differences and the need for policymakers to recognize the value of local boards. Board members are encouraged to advocate to policymakers and elected officials about the value of local workforce boards and the risks of moving to a single state workforce board model. during the ongoing state review process.

As part of the revenue generation aspect of the strategic framework, the Committee discussed the annual fundraising golf tournament's sustainability and the possibility of updating the model. Staff noted that while the event has been successful, changes may need to be made due to increased expenses and a decrease in sponsorships. Committee members agreed that a task force should be formed to review current and explore new revenue generating options. A Revenue Generation Task Force was formed with board members Scott Schaefer, Tony Naylor, Brian Miles, Lisa Whitley, Chip Schellhorn and staff Keith Lawing, Amanda Duncan and Shirley Lindhorst. The group will meet to discuss plans for a 2026 golf tournament and explore new revenue generation ideas.

*Tony Naylor (Kathy Jewett) moved to approve the newly presented version of the 2026-2028 Workforce Alliance strategic framework to include the new mission statement. Motion adopted.*

**4. Leased Space Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Wichita Workforce Center / Administrative Office Lease - Garvey Center**

Chad Pettera provided an update on the RFP for the Wichita Workforce Center (Center) leased space; the current lease expires June 30, 2026. The WA issued an RFP for leased space to house the Center and received five proposals. A special taskforce reviewed and evaluated the proposals and made

a recommendation to the Executive Committee that was approved in December for staff to negotiate a lease with the preferred vendor (current landlord New Leaf Plaza) and a 10-year lease is currently being negotiated with a proposed a rate of \$15.23 per square foot at a cost of \$373,287.30 a year.

Part of this process includes relocating the WA's administrative function currently located at the Garvey Center (300 W. Douglas) to the Center. To accommodate the move, some changes have been requested to the Center that include additional offices, a conference room addition as well as traffic flow and security improvements with completion planned by July 1<sup>st</sup>. The move also requires the termination of the lease with the Garvey Center, which has already been discussed with the landlord there.

At the Executive Committee meeting on January 14, committee members authorized the President & CEO to execute a lease with New Leaf Plaza pending legal review and to notify the Garvey Center of WA's termination of the leased space at 300 W. Douglas in 2026 pending construction timelines. Staff asked Board Members to confirm the approval of the new lease and relocate WA administrative staff to the Center to consolidate operations.

*Scott Stiles (Marcus Curran) moved to approve new lease for Wichita Workforce Center to consolidate Workforce Alliance operations. Motion adopted.*

## 5. Community Impact Projects Updates

Keith Lawing and Amanda Duncan provided a review of current WA projects.

- One Workforce Grant - This five-year, \$9.9 million program to provide training in manufacturing and technology careers ends this month and has been highly successful, far surpassing goals and coming in under budget. A report of outcomes to date was presented and a final report is due to the Department of Labor in May. Staff are putting together a sustainability plan, taking outcomes from the grant and addressing how to move that success forward. A sustainability plan luncheon was hosted on January 21st with grant education and employer partners to review outcomes, share perspectives and gather feedback. Staff are targeting the April board meeting to present the plan.
- Kaufmann Returning Citizen Consortium (RCC) Planning Grant (renamed Kansas Restorative & Opportunity Network (KRON) - The WA has submitted an application with its workforce board counterpart in Kansas City, Workforce Partnership, to the Kauffman Foundation on a plan to improve employment support for justice-involved individuals (JII). A decision is expected in April and if awarded, the grant would result in \$20 million dollars over five years beginning in July 2026 to assist JII's gain employment and provide services to address barriers to employment. A one-page summary of the program was provided to the Committee for review.
- Youth Employment Project (YEP) –
  - A Summer Internship Interview Day is scheduled on February 7th at USD 259's Manufacturing FutureReady Center.
  - Staff are working with Mayor Wu and Wichita Public Schools board chair Stan Reeser on a February 5<sup>th</sup> event where they have personally invited 25-30 community-minded businesses to a luncheon to promote youth internship opportunities and encourage broader employer participation. Staff invited board members to attend the event.
  - A joint regional career exploration and job fair, "Momentum: Explore, Discover, Hire", is scheduled for April 22nd at Century II. 40 area high schools are invited to bring seniors to the event to talk to employers about jobs and sophomores to meet with employers to explore career options. Employers will be from different industry sectors that align with the State of Kansas' 16 career pathway areas.
- Home Base Wichita (HBW) – HBW used funds from the One Workforce Grant to successfully support training for 30 transitioning airmen through a fast track A&P mechanic program but now that that grant has ended there are currently no funds to continue that program. Staff are looking for additional funding and sustaining HBW to perhaps merge with other veterans' organizations in the community to help support and keep military service members in the region.
- EPA Brownfields Job Training Grant – This grant funds training for environmental related careers got a slow start due to the Federal Government shutdown. The first cohort will begin training

February 9, 2026. Currently, there is a backlog of 70 individuals that have inquired about entering the training.

- Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) – This program helps veterans that are homeless or at-risk of homelessness find meaningful employment. Staff are increasing outreach to agencies that serve veterans to increase awareness and educate regarding eligibility requirements of the program.
- Child Care Employer Solutions Summit – Staff are active in a local coalition to bring employers, policy leaders, and community partners together to develop actionable solutions that address childcare challenges in the community. Two informational sessions have been held to discuss efforts to promote employer-led child care solutions such as governmental policies to include the Kansas state tax credit for employers supporting childcare and a proposed a tri-share model where costs are split between local government/philanthropy, employers, and individuals. There are plans for another employer session in March or April and Board members will be invited to attend; the Michigan Tri-Share case study will be reviewed in addition to other potential employer-led childcare solutions.

*Report was received and filed.*

#### 6. **Consent Agenda**

Approval of meeting minutes from July 23, 2025, budget update for program year 2025, LWDB Executive Committee actions since the board meeting on July 23, 2025, Workforce Center operations and one-stop operator update and WA program reports (Fair Chance, Registered Apprenticeship and Communications) were presented to the Board for review and approval.

All board members were encouraged to like, share and repost WA social media and communications to increase visibility.

*Scott Stiles (Dr. Tamara Daniel) moved to approve the action items recommended in the Consent agenda. Motion adopted.*

#### 7. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:23.

*Scott Stiles (Chip Schellhorn) moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion adopted.*

#### **Attendees**

##### Present LWDB Members

- Marcus Curran
- Dr. Tamara Daniel
- Michele Gifford via Zoom
- Jessica Iestas via Zoom
- Kathy Jewett
- Pat Jonas via Zoom
- Jill Kuehny via Zoom
- Tony Naylor
- Erica Ramos
- Luis Rodriguez
- Chip Schellhorn
- Gabe Schlickau
- Dr. Michelle Schoon via Zoom
- Sally Stang via Zoom
- Scott Stiles
- Lisa Whitley

##### Guests & Staff

- Marcy Aycock
- Amanda Duncan
- Denise Houston
- Keith Lawing
- Shirley Lindhorst
- Mary Mann
- Chad Pettera
- Angela Slattery, Goodwill / One-Stop Operator